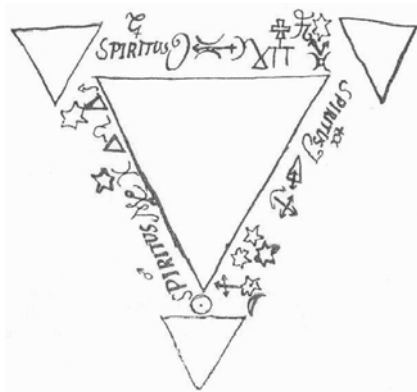




Communist University Introductions

These texts may be used as “openings to discussion” of the original reading texts that are supplied by the CU. They are not intended to be authoritative or conclusive. They are contributions to discussion like any other such contributions. The introductions are not a substitute for the reading texts.

CU Course on Hegel, Part 0, Introduction



Introduction to “Hegel”

We need this course on Hegel because the giant upon whose shoulders Marx and Engels stood was Hegel. Also, from a pedagogical point of view, we must not flinch from the most difficult part of our studies. We must have it in sight, so that over time, if not at once, we will eventually master it.

Lenin wrote:

“It is impossible completely to understand Marx's Capital, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!”

Hegel was born in 1770 and died in 1831. The highest period of “Hegelianism” was the ten years after Hegel’s death, between 1831 and 1841 – formative years for the young Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

The period when “Hegelianism” was orthodox in Germany was followed by a turbulent contestation of philosophies, in which both Marx and Engels, as Hegelians, played prominent parts. The period of philosophical turmoil led up to the multiple revolutions of 1848.

Philosophy was, and still is, crucial, but it is lightly treated in the Marxist canon. Marx got his doctorate for philosophy, and all his writings are conditioned by that study, yet, after his doctoral thesis on Epicurus, he wrote no overt philosophy (although, as Lenin points out, Marx’s writing is saturated with Hegelian ideas). Engels did his best to fill the gap, but his philosophical output is scant in comparison to what is really needed.

The problem that Lenin pointed to, remains. It does not necessarily arise because the Marxists are lazy. It could also arise because:

- There is too little directly philosophical material within the Marxist canon
- Hegel’s work is comparable in volume to Marx’s, but is far more difficult to understand
- The “Logic” is even more difficult to understand than other parts of Hegel
- Hegel’s work is full of special terms that are not found in the same form anywhere else
- Such popularisation of Hegel’s work as exists, is more often than not, misleading

We need a study of Hegel to remedy some of the above problems.

Good Hegel, Bad Hegel

Another difficulty is that although Hegel may have been the giant upon whose shoulders Marx was able to stand, yet Hegel was not Marx, and Hegel was prone to errors, as we (being Marx’s successors) may see it. Hegel is (wrongly) accused of idealism, misogyny, and racism, to name only three such cardinal sins.

Consequently, any student of Hegel must hear and discriminate between the various criticisms, some of which are actively misleading.

Hegel Resources

Andy Blunden’s “[Hegel by Hypertext](#)” is the best and biggest easily-available collected resource. It includes a lot of Hegel’s works and lots of helpful explanatory material, by others and by Andy himself.

Other resources include Marx's and Engels' writing on Hegel; Jon Stewart and James Heartfield to debunk myths about Hegel; Evald Ilyenkov for the relationship with Marx's work; and the existing CU course on Philosophy and Religion.

What do we want to get out of this course?

After Capital, Volume 3, Hegel is the last frontier. There is nothing else that is more difficult, so everything else will be less difficult. Purely from a subjective, studying point of view, Hegel is the highest measure of what we have to achieve. Everything else in our political education will be, relatively speaking, "downhill" from this point.

But in substance, Hegel is much more than that. For example, Andy Blunden, writing of Hegel's motivation as a youth, says: *"Hegel drew the conclusion that the German Revolution would have to be made with philosophy rather than with guns and mobs."*

To a great extent, as we have mentioned above, this is what came to pass. And it appears certain that our future revolution will also have to be made of philosophy. It will not be possible to have a revolution without first securing the philosophical front.

We are therefore looking to capture the salient features of Hegel's work, because Hegel, Marx's master, is still to this day the most advanced of philosophers in history.

These salient features will include a fundamental theory of human development (dialectics); a unified conception of human history; and a full theory of the individual and collective Subjects of History, with a consequent theory of Freedom. These prizes will be enough, for one course, if we can achieve them.

- **Image (above):** Alleged, possibly apocryphal, doodle of Hegel's, showing a triad, found on the Internet. This may well be part of the misleading mythology around Hegel with which we must do battle.



[G W F Hegel, 1770 - 1831](#)

Hegel and Marxism

[G W F Hegel](#) refused to make anything easy. Towards the end of his [Introduction to the Encyclopaedia](#) (1830) he wrote:

“As the whole science, and only the whole, can exhibit what the Idea or system of reason is, it is impossible to give in a preliminary way a general impression of a philosophy. Nor can a division of philosophy into its parts be intelligible, except in connection with the system.”

This could mean: Until you know it, you can't know it. It is not helpful!

But in practice, even Hegel fails to be completely impossible. The same “Introduction to the Encyclopaedia” is actually one text of Hegel's that can be read relatively normally. We will come to it later in this first part of our course on Hegel.

We are not going to “learn Hegel” in its entirety in ten weeks, or at all. Instead, we are looking for the salient points – the ones that stick out – so that we can have some dialogue about them.

We will begin with Karl Marx, because in this course we are particularly looking at the relation of Hegel to Marx. So we may as well allow Karl Marx to explain that.

Marx got his doctorate in 1841 with a dissertation on the Philosophy of Epicurus. This was his only overt work on philosophy. Immediately thereafter, he got involved with the *Rheinische Zeitung* magazine project, soon becoming the editor. Marx then wrote a lot, including sometimes about Hegel, until 1845 when, as we have argued elsewhere, he and Engels become for the first time “Marxists” in full, coinciding with their joint writing of the [“Theses on Feuerbach”](#) and [“The German Ideology”](#).

Perhaps Marx never was a “Marxist”. He is supposed to have denied it. But whether from a “Marxist” point of view, or not, Marx was probably the best critic of Hegel, among the many who had sprung up from the official Prussian [1841 Expurgation of Hegel](#), onwards.

We take Marx’s famous 1844 [“Introduction to a Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right”](#) first (attached; download linked below). The full book, [“Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right”](#), can also be found on the Marxists Internet Archive. In the Introduction, the not-yet-fully-Marxist Karl Marx writes:

“The criticism of the German philosophy of state and right, which attained its most consistent, richest, and last formulation through Hegel, is both a critical analysis of the modern state and of the reality connected with it, and the resolute negation of the whole manner of the German consciousness in politics and right as practiced hereto, the most distinguished, most universal expression of which, raised to the level of science, is the speculative philosophy of right itself.”

Marx’s [“Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy in General”](#), also, like the Critique of the Philosophy of Right, never published in Marx’s lifetime, is given here primarily because it moves around Hegel’s works in a way that may assist readers to begin to mark out some of the salient points (also attached, and linked below).

For an example of the confident way that the young Marx writes about Hegel, and for some hints of things to come, and possible ways forward, see this passage:

“There is a double error in Hegel. The first emerges most clearly in the Phänomenologie, the birth-place of the Hegelian philosophy...”

“The outstanding achievement of Hegel’s Phänomenologie and of its final outcome, the dialectic of negativity as the moving and generating principle, is thus first that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process, conceives objectification as loss of the object, as alienation and as transcendence of this alienation; that he thus grasps the essence of labour and comprehends objective man – true, because real man – as the outcome of man’s own labour.

“We shall now demonstrate in detail Hegel’s one-sidedness and limitations as they are displayed in the final chapter of the Phänomenologie, “Absolute Knowledge” – a chapter which contains the condensed spirit of the Phänomenologie, the relationship of the Phänomenologie to speculative dialectic, and also Hegel’s consciousness concerning both and their relationship to one another.”

In that case one could read the whole of this passage of Marx’s, and then read the [final chapter of the Phenomenology](#), (in German, “Phänomenologie”) and then one would have appreciated some of the strength and the weakness of Hegel, at least as Marx saw them. And it is through Marx, as much as through anyone, that the legacy of Hegel stands as large as it does in the world today.

To put the matter fully in Karl Marx’s hands for the moment, we can quote from his [Afterword to the 2nd German edition of “Capital” Volume 1](#) (1873). Here, Marx “openly avows himself the pupil of that mighty thinker [Hegel]”, and quite briefly explains why:

“My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life process of the human brain, i.e., the process of thinking, which, under the name of “the Idea,” he even transforms into an independent subject, is the demiurgos of the real world, and the real world is only the external, phenomenal form of “the Idea.” With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought.

“The mystifying side of Hegelian dialectic I criticised nearly thirty years ago, at a time when it was still the fashion. But just as I was working at the first volume of “Das Kapital,” it was the good pleasure of the peevish, arrogant, mediocre Epigonoι [Epigones – Büchner, Dühring and others] who now talk large in cultured Germany, to treat Hegel in same way as the brave Moses Mendelssohn in Lessing’s time treated Spinoza, i.e., as a “dead dog.” I therefore openly avowed myself the pupil of that mighty thinker, and even

here and there, in the chapter on the theory of value, coquetted with the modes of expression peculiar to him. The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell.

"In its mystified form, dialectic became the fashion in Germany, because it seemed to transfigure and to glorify the existing state of things. In its rational form it is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom and its doctrinaire professors, because it includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also, the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary."

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Intro, 1844](#), and [Critique of Hegel's Philosophy in General, 1844](#), both by Karl Marx.

CU Course on Hegel, Part 1a



Engels *Left hand* *Right hand* *Max Stirner* *Max Stirner* *Max Stirner* *Max Stirner* *Max Stirner*

Engels' sketch of a gathering of "The Free"

Engels Recalls

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did not spring fully-formed from the head of a revolutionary God. They were products of an environment. That environment was Hegelian, and “Hegelianist”.

Let us recap. [George William Frederick Hegel](#), Philosopher, died of cholera in Berlin in 1831. In that year, [Karl von Clausewitz](#), who had applied Hegel’s thought to [military science](#), died in the same epidemic. Both these men had achieved high honours and high academic positions in Prussia in their lifetimes.

For the following ten years, under the sponsorship of the Prussian Minister of Culture, “Hegelianism” became an academic cult in Prussia, the dominant German and Central European power.

The Hegelianist period in Germany was not altogether a “Triumphal Procession” (as Engels called it). It was not uniform over time. It developed internal contradictions. Hegelianism as a whole began to be problematic for the Prussian monarchist, semi-feudal state. This was not surprising. Whatever Hegel himself or his sponsors may have thought about the completion of history, in practice Hegel had let the dialectical genie out of its bottle. New theories of revolution were bound to arise from it, and did arise.

As a consequence, Hegelianism was actively discouraged in Prussia from 1841. The opening event of this attempted suppression was the series of official state-sponsored lectures given by [F W J Schelling](#) in 1841, in the presence of a considerable number of subsequently-famous people, including Frederick Engels. We will return to this event, known as the “[Expurgation of Hegelianism](#)”, in the next part.

The internal divisions in Hegelianism included “Left” and “Right” Hegelians, and the “Young Hegelians” (self-named “The Free”). The latter were people personally known to Karl Marx, as well as to Engels (see Engels’ sketch, above).

Marx had been studying in Berlin from 1836, and began associating with the Young Hegelians in 1838 (when Marx was 20 years old). Engels spent the year of 1841 in Berlin as a military cadet where he, too, associated himself with the Young Hegelians (see Engels’ sketch of a gathering of “The Free”, above).

The two future revolutionaries did not meet in Berlin, but only met in 1842, in Cologne, Germany, when Marx was editing the magazine *Rheinische Zeitung*, and

Engels was on his way to England. Both were by this time having problems with the Young Hegelians.

Marx and Engels teamed up permanently in late 1844, in Paris, France, and in the following twelve months or so they worked out, for the first time, as a concrete set of revolutionary ideas, what people now call “Marxism”. They did so in a polemical process, and their polemical opponents were the other former Young Hegelians, especially Bruno Bauer and Max Stirner. The background of the polemic was their common grounding in Hegel’s philosophy. In that sense, Hegel could be said to be the third founder of Marxism, with Marx and Engels.

The foreground of the polemic with the other Young Hegelians was a matter of setting aside the non-revolutionary, essentially reactionary, anti-semitic trend of Bauer, and the anarchist trend of Stirner.

Marx and Engels’ combined polemic against the Young Hegelians was commenced almost as soon as they got together, and it was completed in the same year, 1844, to be published the following year, 1845. This was their first joint work, their first jointly published work, and their last work that was not yet fully “Marxist”. It is called “[The Holy Family](#)”. Marx and Engels were not satisfied with it, so in 1845 they began to write another work of polemic against the Young Hegelians, known as “[The German Ideology](#)”, which includes the “[Theses on Feuerbach](#)”. This book is indeed fully Marxist. It was not published in full until after their deaths, but the composition of “The German Ideology” undoubtedly marks the true beginning of mature “Marxism”.

The purpose of the above recapitulation is to show that the birth of Marxism is saturated with the legacy of Hegel. It is reasonable to say that Marx and Engels set out to defend Hegel’s legacy against Schelling, Bauer, Stirner and all comers, while at the same time correcting, developing and improving on Hegel’s work, and that this project turned into what we know as Marxism. The argument begins among Hegelians, in contestation with other Hegelians. This shows why it was that when Engels, late in life and after the death of Marx, came to sum up their work in various ways, the recollection of these origins brought Hegel’s theories to the forefront once again.

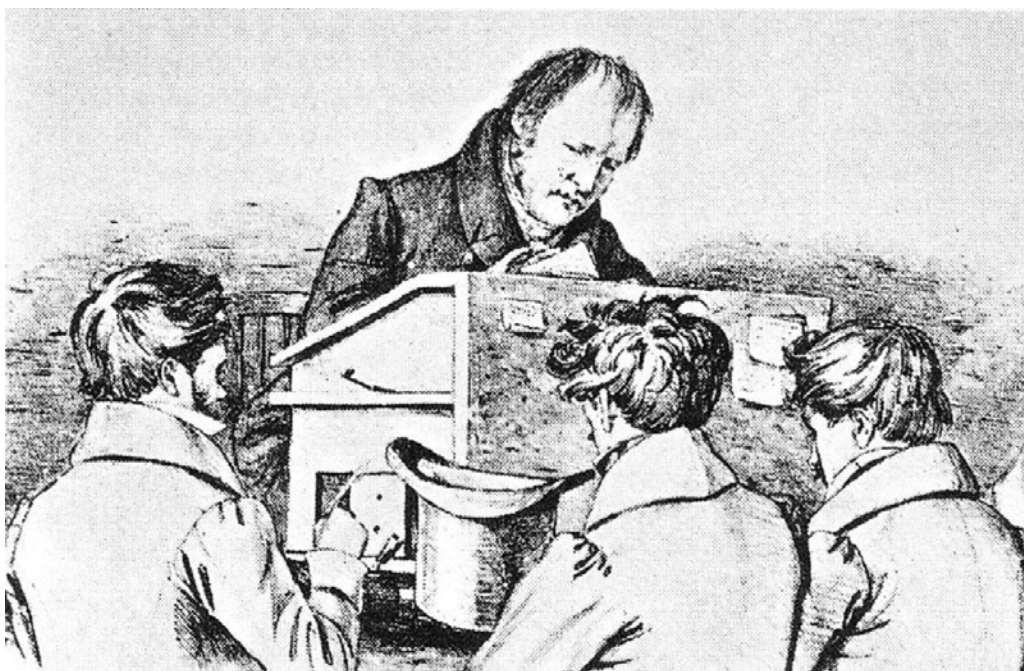
The enormous amount of work that Engels did after Marx’s 1883 death included the editing and publication of “Capital”, Volumes 2 and 3, the writing of “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and The State” (based partly on Marx’s papers), and the preparation of the 1886 pamphlet called in full “[Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy](#)”. Engels died in 1895.

Our main reading matter is the first and the fourth of the four sections of Engels' "Ludwig Feuerbach", of which the hero, jointly with Marx, is undoubtedly Hegel. Engels states in the first part ("Hegel") that they were in a "*philosophical revolution*". In the fourth part ("Marx"), Engels states: "*Hegel was not simply put aside. On the contrary, a start was made from his revolutionary side, described above, from the dialectical method*".

The documents given here are short and readable, and in keeping with the Communist University practice of giving you original writings to discuss. The next will be one by Hegel himself.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Ludwig Feuerbach, Part 1 - Hegel, 1886, Engels](#); [Ludwig Feuerbach, Part 4, Marx, 1886, Engels](#)
-

Hegel, Part 1b



Hegel and his students

Hegel's Introduction to the Encyclopaedia

Hegel's "Encyclopaedia" is the collection of his printed lectures, begun relatively early in his career and enlarged and reorganised as time went on. This "[Introduction to the Encyclopaedia](#)" (download linked below) is dated 1830, one year before Hegel's death in the cholera epidemic of 1831.

The [Contents](#) of the Encyclopaedia is grouped into **Preliminary - Logic - Nature – Spirit**.

“Logic” in these Contents is divided into **Logic Defined – Being – Essence – Notion**.

There is a list of [Hegel’s Works](#) on Marxists Internet Archive. Clearly, Hegel’s works can be organised and presented in different ways. Let us not be in too much haste to grab at it all.

Hegel himself is ultra-cautious. His Introduction to the Encyclopaedia begins with repeated strictures against people taking anything for granted. Hegel does not want people to try looking for short cuts. He does not want to be misunderstood, or misrepresented. Unfortunately, Hegel turns out (mercifully for him, after his death) to have become one of the most badly misrepresented philosophers in history. We will look at some of the false “Myths and Legends” that surround Hegel’s work like devilish sentries, in the next part of this course.

In the last passage of the “Introduction to the Encyclopaedia”, **§18**, Hegel says:

“As the whole science, and only the whole, can exhibit what the Idea or system of reason is, it is impossible to give in a preliminary way a general impression of a philosophy. Nor can a division of philosophy into its parts be intelligible, except in connection with the system. A preliminary division, like the limited conception from which it comes, can only be an anticipation.”

In the beginning, **§1**, he writes:

“We can assume nothing and assert nothing dogmatically; nor can we accept the assertions and assumptions of others. And yet we must make a beginning: and a beginning, as primary and underived, makes an assumption, or rather is an assumption. It seems as if it were impossible to make a beginning at all.”

In **§16**, Hegel even manages to discount the entire Encyclopaedia, vast as it is, thus:

“In the form of an Encyclopaedia, the science has no room for a detailed exposition of particulars, and must be limited to setting forth the commencement of the special sciences and the notions of cardinal importance in them.”

All of this is to say: Wait. I will show you. Don’t even anticipate. Be patient.

Of course, this is at the very moment when he is presenting an introduction to a collection of his lectures, which any student is bound to take as a summary of his work. Students should and must seek out such summaries, lists of contents and short versions, so that they can begin to conceive of the outline of the whole work, and get some idea of what its conclusions are intended to be.

But indeed, Hegel is a good example of one whose message is new and different and which must therefore struggle uphill against peoples' frequent desire to be told only what they already know, and against their resentment at being pushed towards relinquishing their long-held prejudices. Hegel's weariness of a lifetime of such uphill struggles comes through when he writes, at the end of §3:

"One consequence of this weakness is that authors, preachers, and orators are found most intelligible, when they speak of things which their readers or hearers already know by rote - things which the latter are conversant with, and which require no explanation."

In §6, Hegel discusses, from this point of view, one of his most famous sayings, often written (in English): "All that is rational is real, and all that is real is rational". This is a useful first mention of this very characteristic Hegelism from Hegel's own pen, and set within some pages of his prose which are not impossible to read.

Hence, this Introduction will serve well enough as our first taste of Hegel's own writing.

- **Image:** Hegel and his students
- **The above is to introduce the original reading-text:** [Introduction to the Encyclopaedia, Hegel, 1830](#).

Hegel, Part 2



[G W F Hegel, 1770-1831](#)

What Hegel is Not

Jon Stewart's 1996 [Introduction to "The Hegel Myths and Legends"](#) (attached; download linked below) does not give a complete description of the deceptions that surround the work of Hegel – and it launches a few myths of its own.

But what this text can do is to give us some idea of how exceptionally plagued is the work of Hegel with misrepresentation, in a field, philosophy, where misrepresentation and vulgarisation is already common. Jon Stewart writes categorically: *"...the reputation of no other major philosopher has suffered such universal opprobrium on such a broad spectrum of issues as Hegel's has."*

In this piece Stewart gives no indication that he is other than a bourgeois academic. For example, he is happy to relieve Hegel of the "wooden triad", but then to hang the same "wooden triad" around Karl Marx's neck. So, we are not reading Stewart for Marxism.

The "wooden triad" is the series, simple to the point of triteness, of "thesis, antithesis and synthesis" that is wrongly attributed to Hegel, according to Stewart. So why pass it on to Marx?

Karl Marx was a brilliant student of philosophy in Berlin, beginning his course at the height of Hegel-mania just five years after the death of Hegel. We will not presume that Marx's understanding of Hegel was any less than Stewart's. We will rather take Marx as one of the all-time experts on Hegel, if not the greatest of all.

But Stewart is correct to point out *"the extremely difficult nature of Hegel's own texts."*

Stewart continues: *"His complex philosophical system, couched in a stilted, abstract, and idiosyncratic language, has certainly been one of the major causes for the disparity of opinion. Where some see profundity and originality in the obscurity, others see simply gibberish and nonsense. The result of Hegel's opaque writing style and neologistic vocabulary is that his works remain largely inaccessible to the nonspecialist."*

A neologism is a newly-invented word. An example from South Africa in 2015 would be "tenderpreneur". Hegel invented words, and also gave his own peculiar meaning to existing words.

Stewart's round-up of information gives a good indication of the place of Hegel within bourgeois philosophy up to today. Hegel's work was a catalyst, not just for the eruption of Marxism, but also of many strains of bourgeois philosophy.

Stewart writes that Hegel's philosophy [which] *"marks the crossroads in the modern intellectual tradition, has given birth to virtually all of the major schools of contemporary thought: phenomenology, existentialism, Marxism, critical theory, structuralism, pragmatism, hermeneutics, and so on."*

Between these different strands there has been antagonism from time to time. One of the consequences has been the use of Hegel as a kind of whipping-boy. Stewart gives examples of this.

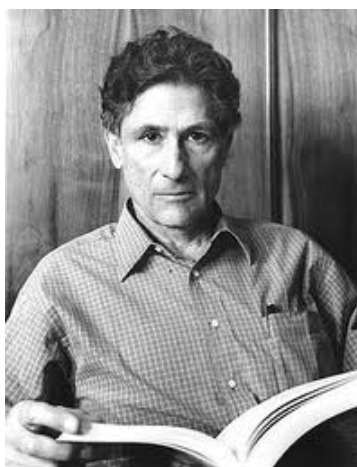
A consequence of the calumnies that people have laid on Hegel in this way is that people come out of nowhere to attack Hegel, even today, because they are carrying grudges.

We will hold fast in this course to the Marxist understanding of Hegel, not only because we are Marxists, but also because Marxism will give us a steady vantage point and measuring-stick with which to size up Hegel. The warring factions of bourgeois philosophy will not provide such a steady standpoint or scale.

In the next item, we will examine the legacy of Kojève, Edward Said, and the case of "The Other", and then we will take a first look at Hegel's version of dialectics.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Hegel Myths and Legends, Introduction, 1996, Stewart.](#)

CU Course on Hegel, Part 2a



[Edward Said, 1935-2003](#)

The Fake “Other”

The fundamental question of philosophy is the relation between human and environment; or in other words, between mind and matter, or in philosophical terms, between Subject and Object.

Some philosophers, including the so-called “Post-Modernists” of our times, have considered that humans are products of circumstances, or effects of chemical processes, and do not have free will. In this view, human society is driven by forces outside its own consciousness, and beyond its control. These philosophers have consequently sometimes declared “The Death of the Subject”, as if to say that all ideas of free will, and of the conscious, self-propelling human development known as Humanism, are out of date now; and this view suits the bourgeois class at this time.

James Heartfield’s 2002 book “[The ‘Death of the Subject’ explained](#)” deals with many different anti-Humanist theories and [concludes](#):

“Like Mark Twain’s death, reports of the ‘Death of the Subject’ are exaggerated. They have to be. The fulcrum point on which society turns is the freely willing subject. For all of the attempts to imagine a world without subjects, but only processes and objective forces, no developed society is conceivable without rationally-choosing individuals at its core.”

In our study of G W F Hegel we will have to return to the question of the relation between the Subject and the Object, because it is central to Hegel’s contribution to philosophy in general and to Marxism in particular. Hegel took this relation and made it dialectical; in other words, he showed how its development happens.

But for the time being we are still concerned with what Hegel is not, and we will use the attached Chapter 3 of Heartfield’s book (a downloadable file is linked below) to show why the by-now-commonplace concept of “The Other”, which appears in newspaper and magazine articles all the time, should not be attributed to Hegel, as much as Hegel does write about “the other” in his books.

Hegel’s “other” is another other, as can be seen from Heartfield’s writing. Heartfield gives the 20th-century history of this confusion, and he is not the only writer to have done so.

The vulgar concept of “The Other” is a fixed, alien and threatening presence, real or imagined. In this imaginary framework, individuals and societies are believed to have their behaviour affected by fear of “The Other”, perhaps unjustly. So for

example, in the example of Edward Said's "Orientalism" that Heartfield begins with, Said's complaint is found to be that the Muslims are wrongly treated as "Other", when they are not actually "Other". The Muslims are unjustly "Other"-ised, according to Said.

From a philosophical point of view Said could have better held that there is no such thing as "The Other" in this fixed sense.

Heartfield then goes further back to show that the origin of the undialectical concept of "*unbridgeable opposition between Self and Other*" is Paris, France, in the 1930s and 1940s, in the persons of Alexandre Kojève, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, among others. Kojève imported and popularized a fake version of Hegel's philosophy, and it took on a life of its own, even penetrating down to popular bourgeois journalism, where "the other" has become a stock phrase, or cliché.

We will look at Hegel's writing, including the famous Master-Slave dialectic, and we will see that, as with Ubuntu, the Hegelian Self and Other are not in "unbridgeable" opposition but are instead intimately linked, to the extent that they are the condition for each other's development, and as such, form a unity.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The 'Death of the Subject' explained, 2002, C3, The Other, James Heartfield](#).

Hegel, Part 2b



[G W F Hegel, 1770-1831](#)

Introduction to the System of Ethical Life

Here follows an approach to Hegel:

In the ancient world of the Greeks and the Romans, and in the Italian Renaissance, there was a Humanism that saw humanity as creating itself in the process of interaction with the external, physical world (in other words: through labour).

In philosophical terminology, this is the interaction between the human Subject and the Objective world. It generates the study of the relation between Mind and Matter, which has been the fundamental question of Philosophy in all eras.

Rational Humanism has always been challenged by more-or-less superstitious belief-systems. So, for example, the Humanists of the Italian Renaissance were overtaken by Platonists and Mannerists and by the mystical Counter-Reformation.

The Italian Renaissance was followed by its mostly Protestant, North European equivalent, usually called “The Enlightenment”. Humanists of the Enlightenment such as Descartes and Spinoza were later contradicted by romantics such as Rousseau and Kant.

Hegel came into a Kantian world, wherein Kant was, in his own words, the “Critic of Pure Reason”. Kant wanted a way around pure reason. Kant wanted a license, or permission, to be irrational, or merely lazy. Kant wanted to escape the most difficult questions. Kant wanted a short cut.

To recover philosophy from Kant’s cop-out, Hegel did not go back to a static vision of the Human Subject, whether individual or social, facing an objective wilderness that must be tamed.

Hegel shows more than that. Hegel shows that the Objective universe is really an observed universe, and is in that sense a Human creation. As much as it has objective (material) existence separate from humans, yet what defines it is not that alone, but also the attention that it gets from humans. The Objective Universe is that-which-is-known, as well as being that-which-is-other.

In the [Introduction to “The System of Ethical Life”](#) (attached; download linked below) Hegel uses two terms in his first sentence, the meaning of which we need to note. “*Intuition*” means sense-perception. “*Concept*” means knowledge. “*Perfect adequacy between intuition and concept*” means that what is sensed, is known.

What is felt, is understood. When sense and understanding correspond, then we have what Hegel calls *"The Idea"*.

"But because they [Intuition and Concept] are then held apart from one another in an equation as its two sides, they are afflicted with a difference."

They must exchange their qualities. They do not remain separate. They develop...

"But what is truly the universal is intuition, while what is truly particular is the absolute concept. Thus each must be posited over against the other, now under the form of particularity, again under the form of universality; now intuition must be subsumed under the concept and again the concept under intuition."

And so on. There is movement. Hegel's is a theory of how change happens. It is a theory of human development.

The word "subsumed" is typically Hegelian, and it carries over into Marxism.

We strive to understand these paragraphs. What we can see is that Hegel is describing, not merely a static relation of Subject and Object, but a development of the relationship such that the opposing terms can change places, or one can be subsumed under the other, but their union, perfect or not, does not negate their identity. A simple relation is not perfect. There is more. The last line of the Introduction says:

"Or in this way the identity of the particular (i.e., the side onto which the intuition has now stepped) with the universal is determined as an imperfect unification or as a relation between the two."

It may be better not to strain to understand such passages. It may be better to leave them open, so that meaning can accumulate around them as we look at more of Hegel's output over the remaining eight parts of this course.

As much as this is simply good study practice (e.g. as advocated by [Tony Buzan](#)), yet patiently deriving meaning from incomplete or "broken" data is also very Hegelian, as we shall see later on.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Introduction to The System of Ethical Life, 1802-3, Hegel](#).



[Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804](#)

Phenomenology, Consciousness and Kant

Our first two parts of our ten-part Hegel series are behind us. Starting now, and for the next five parts, we are going to track Andy Blunden's prepared course of lectures on Hegel.

But rather than leading with Andy's writings, we will take excerpts from Hegel that have been chosen by Andy, compile them together, and treat them as our main discussion text. This will be in keeping with our long-time Communist University way of doing things, whereby we privilege the original writings of our subject, and discuss them.

We will mostly take Andy's good texts as further, additional, optional or alternative reading. Today's main discussion texts are two, linked below.

The **first** consists of five short quotations from Hegel and one from Immanuel Kant. More light may be cast upon them below, and in Andy Blunden's writings, to follow.

Kant

As much as the world that Marx entered was a Hegelian world, so just as much was the world that Hegel was born into, in 1770, a Kantian one. Kant was then approaching fifty, and Kant was still going strong when Hegel published his first

attempt to create a concrete and comprehensive philosophical system, the [System of Ethical Life](#) (1802).

Kant lived a long, respectable and orderly life in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad, Russia), the capital of the major German power of his time, Prussia. Kant said that things (phenomena) cannot be known. The “thing-in-itself” (*ding-an-sich*) is unknowable, according to Kant. Having evaded the basic question of philosophy in this way (i.e. the relationship of mind to matter), Kant freed himself to improvise an elaborate *ad hoc* bourgeois moral code, and he thereby achieved an unparalleled authority in his lifetime.

Hegel was different. Hegel said, in effect: Yes, things cannot altogether be known. But what we see is what we can know, and what we are able to see and to know is what we are, as humans. What we are able to see and to know is also something that develops. The way that it develops can be known, and is in fact dialectical.

In this way, Hegel rescued humanism from the arbitrariness, and the eclecticism, of the eighteenth-century [encyclopaedists](#) (e.g. **Diderot**), the [romantics](#) (e.g. **Rousseau**), the [empiricists](#) (e.g. **Hume**) and the so-called [idealists](#) such as Kant. We can argue about what Hegel meant by “Spirit” and “Idea” later, but what we can note here is the nature of the undoubted movement from Kant via Hegel to Marx.

Hegel restored the relationship of Subject and Object as it had been understood by [Spinoza](#) and the earlier [rational humanists](#), but now rooted it in a *systematic* and especially a *dynamic* understanding, so that it could eventually become, in Marx’s hands, a full theory of change, and therefore a revolutionary theory.

The Master-Slave relationship

The **second** main downloadable linked text today is the famous [Master-Slave passage](#) from Hegel’s “Phenomenology”, which we must read, if only so as to discount it and put it aside.

We have already cautioned ourselves about this passage, which in the 20th century, in the hands of Alexandre Kojève, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, took on a populist life of its own as a reversion to anti-humanist static relationships and the vulgar reification of “The Other”, which is what we have called [“The Fake Other”](#).

For the purposes of this course we are from now on going to proceed, as directed by [Lenin](#), to comprehend Hegel’s “Logic” as best we can, so as the better to understand Marx’s “Capital”. In this matter we are guided by Andy Blunden, who says:

*“Some interpretations of Hegel take as their point of departure the master-servant relation, §§178-196 of the Phenomenology. Very broadly speaking, those Hegelians who take this relation as their essential Hegel and those who take the Logic as their essential Hegel form two almost mutually exclusive schools of thought. **What is special about the master-servant relation is that it is an apparently unmediated relation lacking any third point to mediate the relation.** On the other hand, the Logic, along with the entirety of Hegel’s works, is all about mediation. **It is really impossible to read the Logic from the standpoint of unmediated relations, and in fact, outside of that one passage of about 19 paragraphs, it is impossible to read any of Hegel’s work without making central the relation of mediation.** And in any case, the master-servant relation is about how two subjects still somehow manage to mediate their relation even when there is no third party or common language or law to mediate the relation for them.”*

The Master-Slave relation is an interesting metaphor and a small part of Hegel, but it is not the whole or principal Hegel.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-texts: [Young Hegel excerpts, Phenomenology, Consciousness and Kant](#) and [The Master-Servant Relation from Hegel’s ‘Phenomenology’](#).

Hegel, Part 3a



Hegel and Napoleon Bonaparte, Jena, 1806

The Young Hegel and what drove him

Now that we have struggled with some of Hegel's own words, we may as well take advantage of some of Andy Blunden's illuminating scholarship. See the attached document, or the download linked below, for the first of Comrade Andy's set of ten lectures on Hegel, called by him "The young Hegel and what drove him".

Andy sketches the world of Hegel, corresponding in time with the first (English) Industrial Revolution, containing the Great French Revolution, and extending to the bourgeois military conquests of Napoleon Bonaparte. Hegel actually saw Bonaparte in the streets of Jena, Prussia, in 1806. Hegel admired Bonaparte, and called him *"The World Spirit on horseback"*. "World Spirit" did not mean God.

Andy Blunden points out that in an age of liberals, Hegel was not a liberal. Andy's remarks correspond with Christopher Caudwell's ["On Liberty"](#), where Caudwell points out that men without institutions are mere brutes. (*"Unfortunately not only is man not good without institutions, he is not evil either. He is no man at all; he is neither good nor evil; he is an unconscious brute."* – *On Liberty*)

Andy Blunden says: *"There is some basis for associating Hegel with notions of progress and a 'cultural evolution' in which all the people of the world are subsumed into a single narrative"*. We must look to see if it is with Hegel that the idea of one human history, and "one race - the human race" arrives. In a work like Engels' ["Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State"](#), written a little over half a century after the death of Hegel, and indeed in the "Communist Manifesto" of 1848, the idea of a single human revolutionary history is strongly expressed.

Lastly, Andy Blunden introduces Hegel's "The Spirit". Read about it and leave it to bed down in the mind. But note this passage of Andy's (shortened):

*"One of the difficulties that Hegel had to overcome was the problem of dualism... Kant's philosophy got around mind-matter dualism at the cost of introducing a host of other such dichotomies and it was the need to overcome these dichotomies in Kant's philosophy which was one of the main drivers for Kant's critics [including] Hegel. For Hegel, it was all thought. We will presently come to how Hegel arrived at **difference** from this abstract beginning, but the idea of thought, of Spirit, shaping the world, served as a foundation upon which to build a philosophical system... Thinking [is] the activity of the human mind, but the content of that thinking is objective, it is given from outside the individual, it is the individual's 'second nature'. The objects around us and which are the*

content of our perception and thoughts are the objectifications of the thought of other people, or ourselves. We live in a world not of matter, but of thought objects, which are, like all objects, also material things."

Here is a hyperlinked list of main Works of Hegel in English:

The German Constitution, 1798-1802 (HPW) [Ø](#)

Introduction to *The Critical Journal of Philosophy*, with Schelling (1801) [Ø](#)

Faith & Knowledge (1802) [Ø](#)

System of Ethical Life (1802-3) [Ø](#)

Realphilosophie I (1803-4) & II (1805-6) [Ø](#)

Phenomenonology of Spirit (1807) [Ø](#)

The Science of Logic [Ø](#)

Part I: The Doctrine of Being (1812)

Part II: The Doctrine of Essence (1813)

Part III: The Doctrine of the Notion (1816)

Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1817 & revised up till his death in 1831)

Part I: The Logic [Ø](#)

Part II: The Philosophy of Nature [Ø](#)

Part III: The Philosophy of Mind

1 Subjective Spirit [Ø](#)

2 Objective Spirit [Ø](#)

3 Absolute Spirit

The Philosophy of Right, 1821 [Ø](#)

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Young Hegel and what drove him, 2007, Andy Blunden.](#)



Hegel, Phenomenology and Kant

Andy Blunden's second lecture contains this useful passage:

"Most writers interpret Hegel by importing into their reading of Hegel Kant's concept of subject. This is wrong. Now it is true that on occasion, especially when he is commenting on Kant, Hegel does use the word 'subject' in the Kantian sense, that is to say, as meaning an individual, an individual adult citizen, to be a little more precise. This is invariably the sense in which the Kantian subject is used today, and the same sense is usually, rather kaleidoscopically, read into Hegel. Normally, Hegel simply uses the word 'person' to convey this meaning. For Hegel, 'subject' is not a philosophical synonym for 'person'. It is really important to remember this.

"The word subject went through some transformations since the Romans translated Aristotle, particularly with Descartes, but the core idea that Kant has imparted with the word is the coincidence of three things: the cogito of Descartes, the bearer of ideas and knowledge, the idea of self-determining agent who bears moral responsibility for their actions, and identity or self-consciousness. All three of these entities coincide in the Kantian subject, and Hegel is true to this concept, but it is not an individual person.

"The individual is just a single atom of the whole entity constituted by the collective activity of the community as a whole. Of course, nothing other than an individual human being can think or bear moral responsibility for actions, but they cannot do so as isolated atoms; the content of our thinking is thought-objects which are constituted by the activity of the entire community and past generations. And our actions are vain and meaningless except insofar as they take on significance through the

relation of the individual to the whole community. The point is, how to elaborate this idea of thought and moral responsibility as collective activities, and at the same time develop the conception of individuality which constitutes the essence of modern society.

“In the “System of Ethical Life,” Hegel approached the question of labour not so much from the standpoint of how individuals acquire knowledge, as how the universal, that is, a culture, is constructed. At the basic level, people work with plants, and then animals, and then machinery, and in doing so produce crops, herds and means of production which are passed on to future generations. Likewise, in using words the language is maintained and developed and passed on to future generations, and finally, in abstracting the knowledge of culture and imparting it to a new generation in the raising of children, people are constructing and maintaining their ‘second nature’, the universals which are the content of all thought. When an individual thinks, they think with universals actively maintained by and meaningful only within their community.

“So to provide an adequate concept of the subject, Hegel has to let go of the idea of an individual locus of experience, with access to universal principles of Reason existing in some fictional hyperspace on one side, and on the other side, unknowable things-in-themselves. The content of experience is thought objects which have been constructed by collective activity...”

What we are therefore gaining here, from Hegel, is a philosophy that can reckon with the collective subject, or what Marx and Engels referred to in the last paragraphs of the second part of the [Communist Manifesto](#) as a “vast association of the whole nation”. This is a democracy not as formality or mechanism, but as collective consciousness manifest as fact.

There is no possibility of communism without a conception of this kind.

In the same part of the Manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote that in the “vast association”, the “free development of each [would be] the condition for the free development of all”. The individual subject is not excluded. On the contrary, the individual subject is the basic building-block of society. There is no society without individuals. But what we have, as well, is the collective, social subject.

What we get with Hegel, it seems – and we must confirm this with more reading of the original texts – is the first philosophical treatment of the collective that is not merely presumptuous and declaratory of its existence. We get a working model of

the collective subject, and we get a description of how the collective consciousness is formed, and how it is maintained.

Let us finish off this instalment with a direct quotation from one of Hegel's predecessors – the great [Spinoza](#) – and in the last instalment of this third part of the course, look again at some of Kant's original writing. Then we will follow Andy Blunden's route through Hegel for three more parts, until we come back to look at some of Hegel's successors, such as Marx, Lenin, and [Ilyenkov](#).

Here is Spinoza:

"As far as the 'method for finding out the truth' is concerned, 'the matter stands on the same footing as the making of material tools.... For, in order to work iron, a hammer is needed, and the hammer cannot be forthcoming unless it has been made; but, in order to make it, there was need of another hammer and other tools, and so on to infinity. We might thus vainly endeavour to prove that men have no power of working iron.

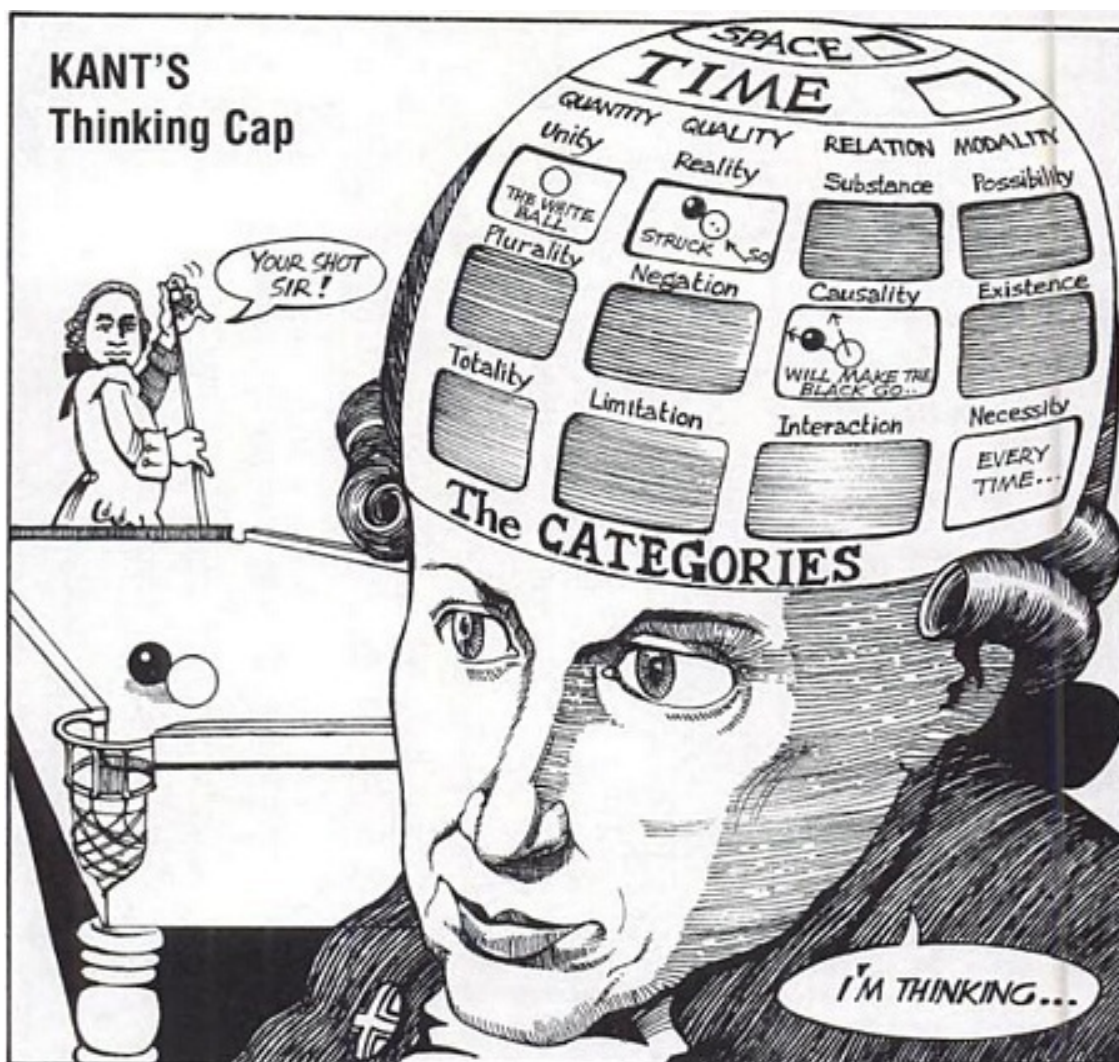
"But as men at first made use of the instruments supplied by nature to accomplish very easy pieces of workmanship, laboriously and imperfectly, and then, when these were finished, wrought other things more difficult with less labour and greater perfection. . . . So, in like manner, the intellect, by its native strength, makes for itself intellectual instruments, whereby it acquires strength for performing other intellectual operations, and from these operations gets again fresh instruments, or the power of pushing its investigations further, and thus gradually proceeds till it reaches the summit of wisdom."

B. de Spinoza (1632-1677)

Improvement of the Understanding, Ethics and Correspondence

Picture: An anarchist ant (impossible).

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Blunden, Hegel, Phenomenology and Kant, 2007](#).



[Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804](#)

Kant, the 'Critic of Pure Reason'

With Immanuel Kant, we will need some word-definitions. "Empirical" means sensed or found; *a priori* means first, or before; *a posteriori* means after.

The [Introduction to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason](#) (attached; download linked below) is a "propaedeutic", which is another word for introduction, or preliminary course. An "organon" is the whole course, or the whole work. "Hume" is [David Hume](#), a Scottish philosopher (also featured in the above cartoon).

Right at the beginning, Kant is trying to persuade his reader that although things are learned by experience, yet it is possible to have known something before. This is a clear self-contradiction of Kant's, but he insists on it. He continues:

“In what follows... we shall understand by a priori knowledge, not knowledge independent of this or that experience, but knowledge absolutely independent of all experience. Opposed to it is empirical knowledge, which is knowledge possible only a posteriori, that is, through experience.”

Kant then claims that the *a priori* knowledge is by nature collective, or in other words social, knowledge.

The source of collective consciousness is a matter of great interest to revolutionaries. Kant says it is already there. Few revolutionaries will agree with Kant.

Kant then prays for a science which will classify the details and describe the extent of *a priori* human knowledge, of which he says, in conclusion, that the first part will be *“the transcendental doctrine of sensibility.”*

Are we any the wiser? At least we have this much: That Kant tried to have his cake and eat it. He wanted to have unreasonable reason. He wanted reason without a source or origin. Later, he even wanted religion that would be “within the limits of reason”. Also, he wanted to create a taxonomy of “antinomies”. That is a list or catalogue of things that contradicted each other, as if to list them would excuse them.

Kant seems to be rehearsing and trying to legitimate the bourgeoisie’s necessary (for them) habit of believing two contradictory things at the same time, or, which amounts to the same thing, taking possession of all arguments and pretending that they all support the bourgeois position.

Part of this mental trickery is to endlessly categorise things. See the above cartoon, which can also be found in “Philosophy for Beginners”, by Richard Osborne, a very helpful illustrated manual. According to Osborne’s book, one of Kant’s slogans was: *“Purposiveness without purpose.”* How pathetic!

Altogether, Kant appears like the fore-runner of the typical modern bourgeois journalist or “analyst”. He can march the reader up the hill, and march the reader down again, purposively, but without purpose.

In this regard, please note that from the very first line, Kant is referring to “our” and “we”. But who is this “we”? It is an *a priori* “we”. It is a “we” that always pretends to be class-neutral, but is not in fact class-neutral. It is a “we” that does not willingly reveal its nature. It hides. So long as the world is Kantian, so long does it remain in the tiresome hands of “analysts”.

Back to Hegel

If Hegel is at all heroic, it must be partly for this: that Hegel refuses Kant, and thereby rescues philosophy from Kant's dreadful pedantry. Hegel seeks to build a knowledge of the common, collective consciousness from history, by a process that can be understood, and observed, as a unity and struggle of opposites, or in other words dialectic.

Andy Blunden calls this man-made collective world of understanding "second nature". This is the social environment, where the physical environment external to human beings is "first nature".

Hegel opens the door that Kant keeps shut. It is the door to honest class-consciousness, which when open, reveals the road to revolutionary thought. It was Marx and Engels who realised this potential in Hegel's philosophy. Conversely, understanding Hegel (as Lenin pointed out*) is going to help us to understand Marx. And that is our goal: Not Hegel for Hegel's sake, but Hegel for the sake of understanding Marx, Engels, and everything that followed.

** "It is impossible completely to understand Marx's Capital, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!" - Lenin*

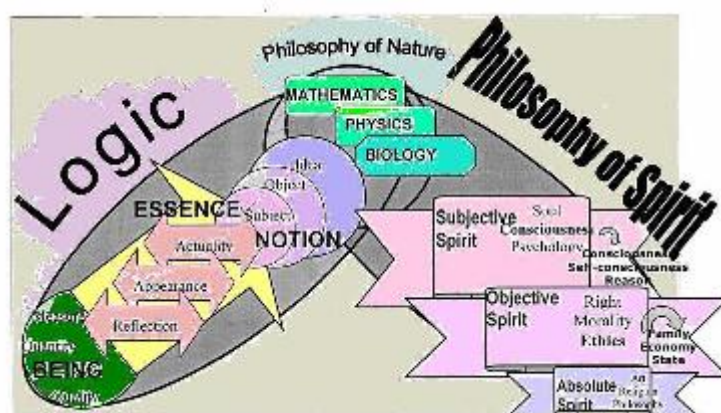
- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Kant, Introduction to 'Critique of Pure Reason', 1787.](#)
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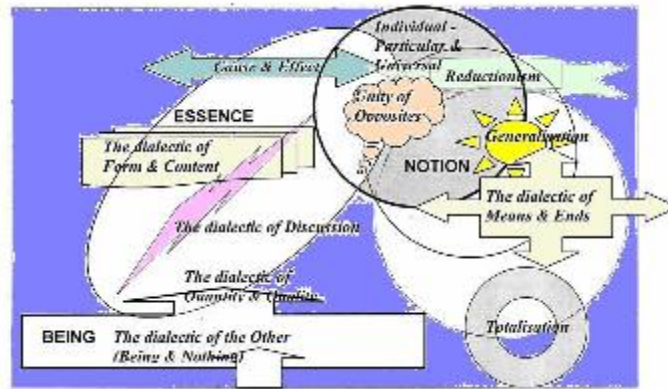
The Logic

Some academics try to illustrate Hegel with diagrams, like the one above. They don't help very much.

The following one is supposed to represent the scheme of Hegel's "Encyclopaedia", as if it was the world represented by an unfamiliar [projection](#):



What this diagram suggests, among other things, is that Hegel's headings (or constructs) are not eclectic or random, but do form part of an organic, or concrete, whole, as you would expect from the one who bequeathed "The Ascent from the Abstract to the Concrete" to Marx and Engels. Here below is another diagram, allegedly showing Hegel's "11 forms of dialectic". We must resist the temptation to reduce Hegel to the level of a corporate inspirational speaker. But we may be reassured to know that Hegel's dialectical concerns (e.g. Unity and Struggle of Opposites; Particular and General; Being and Nothingness; Form and Content; Cause and Effect) are not infinite in number, but are actually quite few.



At least it is reassuring to be able to feel that such organic-seeming totalisations of Hegel as the above two-dimensional diagrams are possible. It is also useful to be shown that Hegel's system is not the relentless march of the triads that the diagram at the top and some of its variations are apt to suggest. The shape is neither even, nor symmetrical. Hegel's thought is not strained. It takes its own shape.

The indistinctness of the diagrams is not a big problem at this stage. We would not want to take them too literally or to trust them too much. They are not Hegel's work and the present distance from where we are now to the point of being able to check the diagrams against Hegel's actual work is long. It would require us to read and internally digest several of the most difficult books ever written, on the way.

But we don't need to do all that. Marx is going to straighten out Hegel for us, anyway. What we need is enough of Hegel so as to fully understand Marx, in keeping with the task set for us by Lenin*.

Lenin says: If you don't have Hegel, or at least his "*Logic*", then you don't have Marx. We are going to get sufficient of Hegel in this course so as to have our Marx on a firm foundation.

The way we will begin this part is with a few spots that we will locate and explore. They will be tiny in relation to the whole but they will furnish us with some reference points, as well as begin to make us used to the great man's style.

At the end of this part, we will take a very much larger portion of Hegel for reading. We must not have a course where we end up still being virgins in relation to the works of the main writer that we are studying. In between, we will look at what Andy Blunden has written about Hegelian Logic and also try to get some assistance from Communist University standby Tony Buzan. So there will be four instalments altogether within this fourth part of our course on Hegel.

So in this instalment we are using a compilation of four short extracts from Hegel's *Logic* and *The Shorter Logic* (see the link to the download, below). Hegel's work is

usually divided into numbered passages (not always single paragraphs) that are usually given a sign such as § or ϕ .

Andy's first given quotation is §62 from *The Science of Logic*. Hegel is saying that negation leads lower forms of consciousness to a higher form of consciousness. He says that for science it is therefore necessary to be able to see that the negative is as good as the positive, and that negation is what moves things on towards a result; and that a result is not an "immediacy", where immediacy is simple, latent, unmoved being.

Hegel is writing of the common consciousness, and therefore of science; this social view of science is the one that Marxism has.

Andy's second quotation is §121 from *The Science of Logic*. This is the famous Hegel! This is the Hegel that drives people crazy, or makes them to think that Hegel is crazy. But Hegel, contrary to what appears, is not wasting time. To say that "being is nothingness" is the beginning of finding out what has substance, and how human beings are able on a daily basis to create, God-like, something out of nothing.

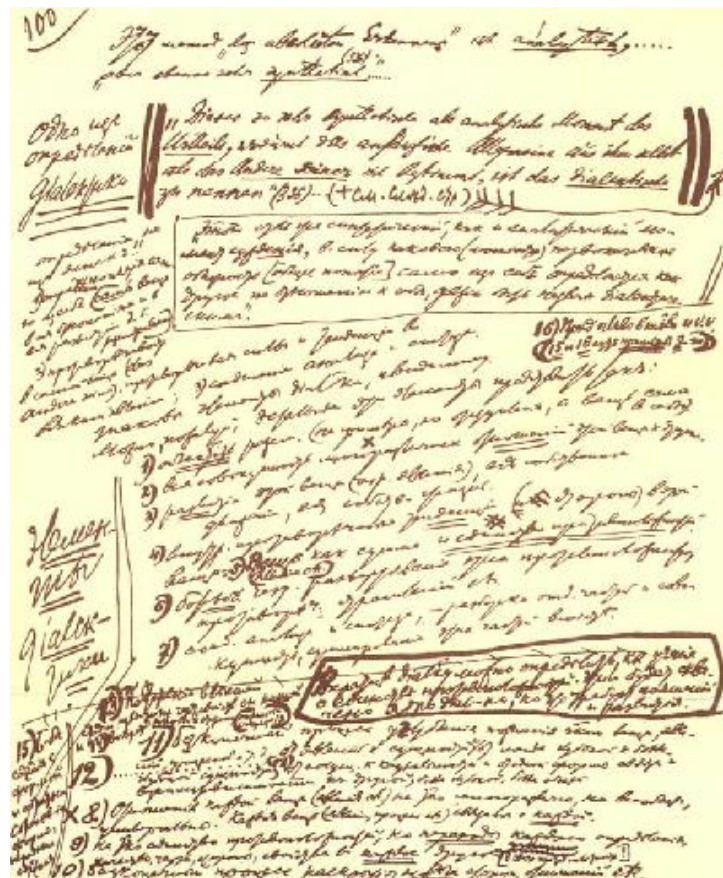
Andy's third Quotation is §133 from *The Shorter Logic*, where Hegel is writing of Form and Content, as a struggle of opposites that define each other and constantly change places. Perhaps this is a good time to remember that this Communist University is not a didactic, but rather a dialogic University, and so to refrain from trying to "define" everything, but instead to leave the door open for discussion. Asikhulume!

Andy's last quotation, §160-1 from *The Shorter Logic*, is about The Notion, and brings at last what is Hegel's special gift to posterity, something we need right now in South Africa, which is a revelation of the nature of the thing called **Development**.

Because dialectic is not a magic for itself, but it is an understanding of development, and how humans develop themselves as humanity. And this is what we need to know.

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [Excerpts from Hegel's Logic](#).

* *"It is impossible completely to understand Marx's Capital, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!"* – Lenin



[Lenin: page 100 of his notebook for "Conspectus of Hegel's book The Science of Logic"](#)

The Subject Matter of the Logic

We will come to **Tony Buzan** in the next instalment of this part of our course on Hegel, but let us also consult him briefly here, before we look at [Andy Blunden](#)'s lecture on "**The Subject Matter of the Logic**" (download linked below). Buzan wrote:

"One of the interesting facts about people using study books is that most, when given a new text, start reading on page one. It is not advisable to start reading a new study text on the first page . . .

"What is essential in a reasonable approach to study texts, especially difficult ones, is to get a good idea of what's in them before plodding on into a learning catastrophe . . . [in other words to find out quickly what the text is about]

"What this means in a study context is that you should scour the book for all the material not included in the regular body of the print. . . Areas of the book to be covered in your overview include:

results
summaries
conclusions
indents
glossaries
back cover
index

tables
table of contents
marginal notes
illustrations
capitalised words
photographs
bibliography

subheadings
dates
italics
graphs
footnotes
statistics
acknowledgements

Never did we need more clues of this kind than when studying Hegel. In this regard we can return to Lenin. A facsimile of page 100 of Lenin's notebook for "[Conspectus of Hegel's book The Science of Logic](#)" is given above. Although Lenin uses only one colour and no illustrations, yet his notes do quite resemble one of Tony Buzan's "mind maps", as we shall see.

It was in this work that Lenin wrote *"It is impossible completely to understand Marx's Capital, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the whole of Hegel's Logic. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!!"*

[In the very next note](#), Lenin wrote: *"Hegel actually proved that logical forms and laws are not an empty shell, but the reflection of the objective world. More correctly, he did not prove, but made a brilliant guess."* This is a good clue and it corresponds to part of what Andy Blunden has to say, as we will see.

Our wonderful resource, the [Marxists Internet Archive](#), has kindly listed, with hyperlinks, [Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks](#) on a single web page; and this is a good moment to remember that Andy Blunden's terrific, fully browsable "[Hegel by Hypertext](#)" is also part of the same Marxists' archive.

Andy's Blunden's lecture on the Subject Matter of the Logic

This lecture was given in 2007 as part of the on-going Australian [Hegel Summer Schools](#). It is readable (but do please skip what you don't understand). From it we can get certain strong clues about Hegel.

One is that Hegel treats sciences as thoughts thinking themselves. His logic is not a single key that can be applied to every kind of thing. He finds that each science thinks in its own way. It follows that his logic is a much more exhaustive work of moving through the entire field of knowledge, describing what is to be found there as a natural history of "second nature". What he seeks to understand is how thought, (science) can arise **without** "presupposition", otherwise called "*a priori*", given or innate understanding.

Now may be a good time to think again about Marx's "Capital" in this context. Marx's quest (pursued from the 1840s, and finished in the late 1850s, after which "Capital" Volume 1 was composed and published in 1867) was also for one thing, and quite a similar thing: Marx's quest was for *"the secret of the self-increase of capital"*.

Both men were looking to explain something that came from nothing; Hegel as a philosopher, for science in all cases; Marx for the phenomenon of the new ruler of the world: capital.

Contrary to what some of Marx's followers (including at times, Lenin) have said to the effect that he had discovered a key to understand the world, Marx's three actual volumes of "Capital" turn out to be analogous to Hegel's, in that there is no single key that opens all doors, but actually many keys that have to be found.

As with Hegel, much of what is found by Marx is thoroughly "counter-intuitive" as we would say these days. In other words, what is obvious is not always true, and what is found is not to be corrected to fit preconceptions. "Consistency" is not usual, and has no logical, let alone moral, force.

Specificity matters. History matters. Logic is not independent of its content and its history. Hegel and Marx are at one to this extent. Specificity is never lost, even though the essence of logic is movement, or development, and the developing logic is what Hegel, for want of a better word, calls Spirit.

We are not ready for closure yet. We may never be, with Hegel. But one thing we could derive from what we can see so far is to say that development is the essence of society, and is not something that is done to society, or that society does when it is not sleeping. Development is not an option. It is never absent. There is only development, and nothing else. If we are not developing towards heaven, then we are developing towards hell. "Those not busy being born are busy dying," as one of Bob Dylan's songs says.

Andy Blunden wrote a whole book on the [Meaning of Hegel's Logic](#), available free on MIA. Another very helpful work of Andy's is [Getting to know Hegel](#). The latter is an Appendix to Andy's great work-in-progress book on "[The Subject](#)". This man is helping us!

- The above is to introduce the original reading-text: [The Subject Matter of the Logic, Andy Blunden](#).

Course: Hegel's Logic

22001, Hegel's Logic, Introductions Booklet 1 of 2

10739 words